

to do—in the coaching ranks and the management and the scouting and all of that. We ought to keep working on it.

The second thing I'd like to say is, I hope that everybody who's in an athletic program also learns good life skills to make good choices, good decisions; can take something out of the teamwork, the rules of things that you get from being in athletics so that if they play in high school but not in college that they're still better off and they're better citizens.

The same thing if they play in college, not in pros. The same thing when they finish their pro career. We didn't talk much about that tonight, but I think that's important—that the lessons learned from athletics carry over into good citizenship, including attitudes about people of different races. If that happens, we're going to be a lot better off.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7 p.m. in the Cullen Theater at Wortham Theater Center. In his remarks, he referred to former Houston Mayor Bob Lanier. The townhall meeting was broadcast live on the ESPN cable network as "Sports and Race: Running in Place?" The meeting was part of "One America: The President's Initiative on Race."

Exchange With Reporters in the Pratt City Neighborhood of Birmingham, Alabama

April 15, 1998

Tornado Damage

Q. Mr. President, now that you've seen it firsthand, what do you think?

The President. It's horrible. But I'm glad so many people lived, like these people here. They were in the—they got warning, so they went in the bathroom and lay down. They have two 8-year-old twins. They had their children with them. So they're all unhurt.

We've just got to make sure that they get—they have no livelihood here. And the important thing is that we move this assistance as quickly as we can to them.

Disaster Assistance

Q. What assistance are you bringing today?

The President. We have all kinds of personal assistance, and we're also going to try to help them with the cleanup so they can

get back to normal and also hire some people around here, while they're otherwise idle, to be part of the cleanup.

Q. What are you trying to say to these people? It's got to be so difficult to talk to people——

The President. I think the most important thing is that they—right now a lot of them are still almost in shock, but they're beginning to think—it's been a few days now—they're beginning to think about how they're going to live. And the important thing is that we work out all the practical problems of their lives right now—make sure everybody has got a place to live and food and income to live on—and then that we move all these claims through as quickly as possible and do everything we can to speed the process by which they can return to normal.

There is so much grief and frustration and loss. The most positive thing that can be done is just to get everybody focused on tomorrow. If they've all got something to look forward to tomorrow, some progress, no matter how halting, it's been my experience that that's the healthiest thing that can happen, that everybody—just start people focused on coming back. And so that's what we're trying to do.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. while touring tornado damage in the area. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks in McDonald Chapel, Alabama

April 15, 1998

Thank you very much. Thank you. Let me, first of all, thank Governor and Mrs. James, Senator Shelby, Congressman and Mrs. Bachus, Congressman Hilliard, and we were joined earlier today by Congressman Riley and Congressman Aderholt, my long-time friend Mayor Arrington and my friend Senator Heflin. I thank all of you for joining us, Senator Escott, Representative Hilliard, Sheriff Woodward, and all the law enforcement officials.

I want to thank James Lee Witt and our SBA director, Aida Alvarez, for their presence here today and all the FEMA workers